

REGION IX, MAINLAND REGIONAL RESPONSE TEAM MEETING MINUTES

OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA

13-14 NOVEMBER 1997

I. General Information:

The Region IX, Mainland Regional Response Team (MRRT) Meeting was held at the Executive Inn, Oakland, California and was chaired by the U.S. Coast Guard and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

II. Welcome and Introductions:

The meeting was called to order on Thursday, 13 November 1997 at 0900, by the MRRT co-chairs CAPT Edward Page and Ms. Kathleen Shimmin. CAPT Page started the meeting by mentioning that several significant spills had occurred since the last meeting and recommended that the RRT review its initiatives to ensure compliance with the National Contingency Plan. Attendees and observers were welcomed and each attendee introduced themselves to the group.

III. Agenda Items:

- Environmental Protection Agency/EPA Update: Ms. Kathleen Shimmin (EPA) informed the group of EPA initiatives (Emergency Planning) for 1998 and reviewed the Fiscal Year 1998 Work Plan for the Region IX, Mainland RRT. The following revision and addition was made to the RRT initiatives: “(2) Primary focus will be on those areas which will most likely be affected by adverse El Niño floods” and “(5) The Region IX, Mainland RRT will continue to review response plans established for the shipment of spent nuclear fuel through its region to ensure that the public health and the environment are protected”. The meeting schedule for Fiscal Year 1998 was reviewed and is as follows: 2nd Quarter (March 1998) in San Diego; 3rd Quarter (May 1998) in Arizona; 4th Quarter (September 1998) in Lake Tahoe with an additional meeting in Las Vegas.
- State of California/California Update: Ms. Kathy Slaminski (OES) advised the group of the Governor’s focus on El Niño and the need to have response plans prepared in anticipation of its adverse affects. Lessons learned from the 1997 floods and other flood scenarios are being used to update flood response plans and procedures. Mr. Don Lollock (OSPR) informed the group that OSPR was involved with three significant spills (Humboldt Bay, Santa Barbara, and Monterey) since the last RRT meeting. The five thousand gallon oil spill in Humboldt Bay caused a major ecological disaster that affected 430 live oiled birds and 400 dead birds. The Humboldt State Wildlife Care Center treated some of these birds which included Aleutian geese, snowy plovers, and other endangered species. New OSPR phone numbers were provided: 24 hour emergency contact (916) 445-0045; OES emergency operations center (916) 262-1621.
- Department of the Interior/DOI Update: Ms. Pat Port (DOI); Ms. Dottie Lofstrom (BOR); Ms. Bidya Choudhury (DOI). Ms. Lofstrom provided information regarding a Bureau of Reclamation spill response program designed to minimize environmental impacts of a hazardous materials release in the Colorado River (from Hoover Dam to the Southern International Boundary with Mexico). This program includes providing tribal governments and other government agencies with spill response training and emergency preparedness exercises. Ms. Choudhury provided the results of the Colorado River contingency plan and an El Niño contact list for Department of Interior agencies.

- Coast Guard MSO San Francisco Bay/Marine Safety Office Update: LT Kent Bauer (MSO) informed the group of the MSO's response to both the Santa Cruz mystery spill and the Humboldt Bay oil spill. The mystery spill in Santa Cruz was believed to be a non-toxic fish oil and disabled over 400 birds by coating their feathers, and making it impossible for them to fly or keep warm. The incident command was shared by the Coast Guard, the State Parks, and State Fish and Game. Activation of the Department of Fish and Game Oiled Wildlife Veterinary Care and Research Center in Santa Cruz provided immediate care for approximately 200 oiled birds.
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration/NOAA Update: CDR Bruce Hillard (NOAA) advised the group of an informational workshop on "The effects of El Niño in the San Francisco Bay Area" that was held on October 31st in Oakland. Over 150 people attended the workshop and listened to experts explain what El Niño is and what possible effects it would have on the San Francisco Bay region. CDR Hillard also informed the group of the San Francisco Bay Physical Oceanographic Real Time System (PORTS). PORTS is designed to provide crucial information in real time to mariners, oil spill response teams, managers of coastal resources, and others about San Francisco Bay's water levels, currents, salinity, and winds. In partnership with NOAA's National Ocean Service (NOS); the California Office of Oil Spill Preparedness and Response (OSPR), the U.S. Geological Survey, and the local community, the San Francisco Bay Marine Exchange operates PORTS as a service to those who must make operational decisions based on oceanographic and meteorological conditions in the Bay.
- Minerals Management Service/MMS Update: Mr. Craig Ogawa (MMS) provided information on the Torch platform Irene oil spill near Vandenberg Air Force Base and MMS preparations for El Niño. Mr. Ogawa also informed the group of MINT and MARINE teams and provided a web site where more information could be obtained (<http://www.mms.gov/omm/pacific/enviro/mint.html>).
- Coast Guard MSO Los Angeles/Long Beach/Marine Safety Office Update: CDR Mike Moore (MSO) informed the group of the MSO's response to the Torch platform Irene oil spill near Vandenberg Air Force Base. A discharge of an estimated 13,000 gallons of heavy black crude oil occurred when an offshore pipeline from the platform Irene had ruptured.
- Department of the Energy/Spent Nuclear Fuel Update: Mr. Bob Stump (DOE) informed the group on the shipment of spent nuclear fuel to the Naval Weapons Station in Concord.
- Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry/ATSDR Update: Mr. Bill Deviny (ATSDR) informed the group of the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry Index. This index is used to monitor communities near "superfund" sights to determine what environmental effects they may have on surrounding communities. For example, the city of Livermore, California is monitored to determine what environmental effects (if any) Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory may have on Livermore or its surrounding areas. The ATSDR has no enforcement power and their main office is located in Atlanta, Georgia next to the Center for Disease Control (CDC). More information on ATSDR could be found by accessing their web site (www.atsdr.gov).
- Federal Emergency Management Agency/FEMA Update: Mr. Neil Johnson (FEMA) provided an Overview of the Crisis and Consequence Management program that involves the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The objective of this program is to provide a joint FBI/FEMA response to an act of terrorism.
- National Park Service/National Park Service Response System: Mr. Rick Dawson (NPS) informed the group that the National Park Service controls over 112 miles of shoreline in the San Francisco Bay Area and is a major player in the event of a significant oil or hazardous material spill. In addition to OPA '90/CERCLA funds, the National Park Service has response authority under the Park System

Resource Protection Act (PSRPA). This act allows the National Park Service to collect for restoration, replacement, and acquisition of NPS property that is affected by an oil or hazardous material spill.

- Environmental Protection Agency/FOSC Update: Ms. Kay Lawrence (EPA) informed the group that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is conducting a removal action at two K&L Plating sites in Oakland, California. A removal action consists of activities taken immediately to protect human health and the environment from the release or threatened release of hazardous substances. This action was taken as a result of a discovery, by State inspectors, of a chemical spill inside the K&L plant on September 30, 1997. Approximately 1,200 gallons of hydrochloric acid had leaked from a 1,500 gallon vat and had accumulated in a secondary, concrete bermed containment area. Upon notification of the leak, Oakland Fire Department and EPA HAZMAT crews responded to assist the State of California staff already present at the site. Evaluation of the facility showed that numerous other plating-related materials, including several vats of cyanide-based plating solutions, were located within the bermed area affected by the acid spill. Because of the strong corrosive properties of hydrochloric acid, responders were concerned that the acid could eat through the vats and potentially result in the mixing of hydrochloric acid and the cyanide-based plating solutions, generating toxic hydrogen cyanide gas. To ensure that such a mixture did not occur, EPA HAZMAT crews first removed all of the liquid cyanide from the affected vats and then initiated the removal of the spilled acid. These measures insured that no contact would occur between the spilled acid and the cyanide. Air monitoring within the facility and directly outside of it confirmed that no hydrogen cyanide gas was generated in the incident. As a precautionary measure during the initial stages of the response, neighboring residences were temporarily evacuated. Now that the initial emergency phase and evacuation is completed and the EPA has removed and stabilized the hazardous materials involved in the incident, the EPA is proceeding with further evaluation and clean-up of the facility. The EPA is performing this removal action to mitigate the health risk which may be caused if a person comes into direct contact with the chemicals on site and to ensure that the potential for any hazardous releases from the facility is eliminated.
- Fish and Wildlife Service/Annual Summary of Spill Response Activities for Northern California: Mr. Jim Haas (USFWS) informed the group of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the California Department of Fish and Game joint response to the Donner Pass 17,000 gallon diesel spill. The spill affected aquatic invertebrates, fish, small mammals, and plants. The USFWS also responded to the 20,000 gallon Peyton Hill Pipeline Release which affected salt marshes, harvest mice, and migratory birds. Currently, a remediation and restoration plan for the incident area is being developed.